

---

A  
R E V I E W  
OF  
MR. BROWN'S  
WORK ON VACCINATION,

EXTRACTED FROM THE

*Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal,*

AND RE-PUBLISHED

By Order of the Gentlemen who Superintend the  
COW-POCK INSTITUTION,

IN SACKVILLE-STREET, DUBLIN.



Dublin :

Printed by JAMES CHARLES, 49, MARY-STREET.—1809.

[*An Inquiry into the Antivariolous Power of Vaccination ; in which, from the state of the Phenomena, and the occurrence of a great variety of Cases, the most serious doubts are suggested of the Efficacy of the whole Practice, and its powers at best proved to be only temporary. From which also will appear, the necessity of, and proper period for again submitting to, Inoculation with Variolous Virus.* By THOMAS BROWN, Surgeon, Mussleburgh. 8vo. Edinburgh, printed for the Author, 1809. Pp. 327.]

MR. BROWN, seems to consider himself as absolutely the first who has ventured to oppose the torrent of error, originating with Dr. Jenner, and carrying along with it all classes of society. "All who have wrote (written) upon the subject, have acquiesced with (in) the grand results of its author," p. 2. At least, he claims the merit of being the first antagonist of Dr. Jenner worthy of notice.

"It must be confessed, that at the commencement of the practice, an opposition arose from a few individuals of the profession ; but so far from thinking that it was inimical to the new practice, I am convinced that it contributed not a little to increase its reputation, and to extend its influence. Their arguments in general were deemed weak, their assertions unqualified, their facts few and insignificant, and upon the whole (their facts?) conducted with such a total want of the true spirit of inquiry, as, hitherto, not to be considered as any exception to the general rule. They not only gave an easy victory to their opponents, but contributed to the total extinction of all opposition, by creating a terror in every liberal mind, at being blended with such a *contemptible minority*."

What the Moselies, the Squirrels, the Rowlies, the Birchs, the Lipscombs, and the great grandson of Charles the Second will say to this, we know not ; but leaving the antivaccinists to revenge their own wrongs, we shall proceed to the proper subject of this article, which is not so much to appreciate the merits of Mr. Bryce and of Mr. Brown, or their works, as to inquire whether vaccination still deserve the confidence we have on former occasions expressed in its antivariolous power, or whether the writings of Mr. Brown and others have convinced us, that we were deceived by appearances, and misled by ignorance and prejudice.

Before entering into the consideration of this question, we shall briefly notice, that all parties agree that the cow-pox is not contagious, and that it is a much milder disease than even inoculated small-pox. Nay, Mr. Brown, although he gives us to understand that he was a very successful variolator, and has humanely disclosed his method of frequently rescuing variolated patients as it were *articulo mortis* (p. 30.), says, when laboriously proving that cow-pox is not small-pox,



“ Small-pox have been known in this country for a thousand years, and how long in other quarters of the world is uncertain; they are also universal; are a disease of the most severe, loathsome, and dangerous description; highly contagious; and admitting of no other variety, but in the severity of their symptoms, and always retaining their characteristic phenomena.—Whether propagated by contagion, or by inoculation, they almost uniformly produce considerable fever, and other distressing symptoms, which are also to a greater or less extent, followed with a characteristic pustular eruption.”

But the immense superiority of cow-pox over small-pox in these respects would be perfectly nugatory, if it did not protect us effectually and permanently against the latter disease. Mr. Bryce and the majority of the profession assert, that it does, and the public have the strongest possible proof of their sincerity, in the vaccination of their own children, and in the voluntary renunciation of great professional emoluments, although Mr. Brown has thrown out an unintelligible insinuation, “ that the motives of its greatest advocates are not more disinterested than those of its greatest enemies.”—p. 8.

One set of antivaccinists, on the contrary, contended, that the cow-pox had no antivariolous powers whatever. But the fallacy of this opinion has been abundantly proved by the immense number of those vaccinated in all parts of the world, who have resisted repeated inoculation and exposure to small-pox infection, under circumstances the most favourable for its action.

Another set, equally hostile to vaccination, but unable to controvert the fact just mentioned, alleged, that this security was merely temporary; at first they contended that it would wear out in the course of a year or two; and now, when this opinion also has been overthrown by experience, Mr. Brown, shuddering at the dreadful and distressing idea of “ what may *not* be the consequence, at the distance of twenty or thirty” years, extends the term of security to five or six years, when he says it will certainly expire; and, after daily increasing experience shall have shewn that this opinion is as groundless as the former, another more provident antivaccinist may prolong the term to sixteen or sixty years. We shall state Mr. Brown’s creed in his own words, lest we should be accused of misrepresenting it, for we do not pretend always to understand him, and we are aware, that very different opinions are stated in other parts of his book. His inferences relating to this subject, from his experience in vaccination, are:

“ 1. That they afford grounds for concluding, that the antivariolous influence, directly after vaccination, is to be considered as *nearly* perfect.

“ 2. That in proportion to the distance from the period of vaccination, the antivariolous power is *proportionally* diminished.



“ 3. That about three years after vaccination, the constitutional influence is so much diminished, as readily to allow the operation of the variolous contagion, but still exerting a considerable effect, in *mitigating* the disease.

“ 4. That at the distance of five or six years from vaccination, the facility is so much increased, as hardly to impart *any* security, and so much diminished in its powers of *mitigating* the disease, that, at this period, the cases very nearly approach to the most common form of the distinct disease.

“ 5. That the eruptive fever, and all the other peculiarities of small-pox, increase in severity, and assume the characteristic phenomena, according to the foregoing rule, so as to *approach* to the natural disease.

“ 6. That the period of security, as well as the severity of symptoms, are evidently influenced by the *manner* in which the contagion is applied.

“ 7. That the powers of variolous contagion are evidently increased by the accumulation of individuals, although not attended with small-pox eruptions, and also, in proportion to the number of cases, and extent of eruption.

“ 13. That the cases of re-inoculation exactly correspond in their effects with the influence of the epidemic disease, always making a nearer approach, both to the external characters of an inoculated pustule, and to the constitutional affection, exactly in proportion to the distance they are removed from vaccination.

“ 14. They also distinctly show, that there is a material difference betwixt the powers of the small-pox contagion, exerted in its epidemic form, and when imparted by inoculation.

“ 15. These cases, and the whole phenomena and circumstances of vaccination, shew, that there are just grounds for concluding, that a specific action may exist, *minus*, or *negatively*,† in the constitution; that therefore it would be improper, in the event of vaccination being found inadequate to maintain its antivariolous character, to re-inoculate those cases which have previously undergone vaccination, before it was capable of producing a distinct constitutional effect.

“ *Lastly*, That they afford strong grounds for concluding, that this distinct constitutional influence cannot be depended upon to take place, sooner than about six years from vaccination.”

In the refutation of this doctrine, it might be sufficient to quote the following passage from Dr. Willan: “ I will not repeat the arguments from analogy, which have been employed by several

---

† As we really do not understand this *mathematico-pathological* doctrine, and as it appears to be extremely profound, we wish that Mr. Brown had enlarged upon it a little. It only occurs again in the following luminous passage: “ Although, for the reasons already given, I consider the areola as a decisive test of a constitutional effect, yet, as we have strong reasons for supposing that a specific action may exist *minus* in the constitution, I would rather recommend waiting until a distinct constitutional effect can be obtained, which I am inclined to think, will be found pretty uniformly to follow about the sixth year from vaccination.”—p. 300.



writers, in answer to the opinion that vaccine inoculation is only a temporary preventive of the small-pox. The supposition does not rest upon either probable or consistent grounds, as the cases of variolous eruption adduced above, took place *without any certain order from five months to seven years after vaccination*," p. 66. ; but it is worth while to try Mr. B's. doctrines by his own experience, admitting for the sake of argument, the *correctness* of his statements, in order to ascertain whether Mr. B's inferences could be logically and fairly drawn from his premises.

There are three sets of cases; 48 which he designates cases of small-pox succeeding to vaccination; 12 cases of inoculation after vaccination; and 4 cases of small-pox conjoined with vaccination. The last class, although illustrative of a curious though well known fact in the history of vaccination, has no reference to the point at issue, as the small-pox infection preceded or was simultaneous with the vaccination.

With regard to the second and third sets of cases, they are decidedly against Mr. Brown's doctrine and inferences, so far as we are able to collect these from the mass of contradiction and absurdities in which they are involved. In one place, p. 293. we are told "that it (vaccination) is incapable of influencing the system in a *regular or positive manner*; that many of the phenomena of the disease resemble those produced from matter having no specific influence; that *in general* its effects, so far as they can be observed, are *merely local*; that no one certain criterion exists, of the attainment of constitutional vaccination; in short, there is not one circumstance belonging to the subject void of confusion, uncertainty, and contradiction."

But Mr. Brown's favourite doctrine, if we comprehend it, is, that this vaccination, whose effects are *in general merely local*, *invariably* exerts a *constitutional* effect; and that, although incapable of influencing the system in a *regular or positive manner*, its anti-variolous powers are at first nearly perfect, but gradually and *regularly* decay, exactly in proportion to the distance from the period of vaccination.

We are now to speak of the effects of inoculation\* after vaccination a proving or disproving Mr. Brown's assertions and hypothesis. Mr. Brown, like all prudent practitioners when they first ventured upon vaccination, satisfied himself of its efficacy by subsequent inoculation with variolous matter.

"When I commenced the practice of vaccination, in common with most practitioners, I inoculated them a few weeks, or months after. This I continued to do, to the extent of thirty or forty cases, when, finding the appearances nearly similar, I desisted.—In none of these trials *were* there ever the smallest appearance of a pustule, but frequently the point of the tumour presented the appearance of a small shining watery vesicle. In *no case were* there the smallest shew of acircular inflammation, or areola, and *no* constitutional affection whatever.

\* Mr. Brown confines the term *inoculation* to the application of small-pox matter.



But satisfied as he was with the results of these 30 or 40 cases, for he became an early convert and advocate for the new practice, (p. 12.) we are told in the very next page that, from the appearance which took place on inoculating his very first vaccinated patient, his conviction of its security was not a little staggered; that he suggested his doubts of its being a complete antidote, and that he has since, from all the trials, experiments, and practice he has had, seen no cause to change his mind.

Again in p. 260, and not very consistently, but that is nothing to Mr. Brown, he says, "*neither in inoculation after small-pox, nor even for some time after vaccination, or in re-vaccination itself within a certain period, we cannot produce the smallest approach to a pustule or vesicle;*" but we are told, in page 256, although it would be endless if we were to attempt to trace Mr. B. through all his mazes of inconsistency.

"On the contrary, if you inoculate a person who has undergone vaccination only a few weeks before, you will almost uniformly obtain a large highly elevated, and inflamed tumor, having a vesicular point, *sometimes distinctly approaching, if not to a pustule, at least to a vesicle*, but with no areola, which, after continuing for nine or ten days, will gradually decay, seldom leaving a scab, and never followed, or attended with any constitutional derangement."

Now, leaving our readers to discover at their leisure the exact result of Mr. B.'s inoculations soon after vaccination, which, sometimes distinctly approaching, if not to a pustule, at least to a vesicle, have not the smallest approach to a pustule or vesicle, we proceed to examine his cases of inoculation at a more distant period from vaccination. They are in number 12; six of them were inoculated upwards of five years after vaccination, and six of them within that period; of course, according to Mr. B.'s hypothesis, the effects should have been much more considerable upon the former than upon the latter, but from a careful perusal of these cases no such inference can be drawn.

Had Mr. Brown reinoculated some of those thirty or forty cases, which he had inoculated soon after vaccination, eight years and a half before his publication, he would have fairly brought his hypothesis to the test of experiment, and we should not now have had the trouble of refuting it. That they would have resisted the infection, there cannot be a doubt, especially when we consider that he is obliged to acknowledge that he has not "*hitherto met with any cases where small-pox has occurred after undergoing the test of inoculation,*" (p. 301), although his patients chiefly resided in a parish, where, according to his calculation, one in eight of those vaccinated upwards of four years (p. 295) before, has been since affected with small pox.

But Mr. Brown not only draws this inference from his own cases, but, by a most strange species of logic, pretends to draw the same conclusions from Dr. Stanger's experiments, which in the opinion of Dr. Stanger, and of every person of common understand-



ing, prove exactly the reverse. In November 1804, twenty children, who had been vaccinated in 1801, and afterwards variolated in 1802, were a second time inoculated with matter taken from a child labouring under the natural small-pox. Mr. Brown chooses to say of this decisive and incontrovertible experiment.

“ Now, I apprehend, from this description, although a very imperfect one, it clearly appears, that what I have elsewhere contended for is strikingly corroborated ; for in those inoculations, which included only periods of some months, to that of twelve, *only a very trifling effect*, such as I have already described, was produced ; but when it came to be repeated, at the distance of two or three years, not only did the previous inoculation afford no additional obstruction to the progress of the second inoculation, but now *a greater inflammation and even pustules*, were produced ; distinctly shewing, that the immunity from small-pox was much weakened, by the increased distance from vaccination.”

Though Dr. Stanger could have foreseen the possibility of such a misrepresentation; he could not have been more cautious in his language, in order to convey the perfect identity of effect from both inoculations.

#### Effects in 1802.

“ In *most* of these cases, the puncture presently healed ; in *some*, slight inflammation was produced ; and, in *three* or *four* of the cases, there appeared a small accumulated pustule, which, after some days, was succeeded by a slight scab, no constitutional disorder having intervened.”

#### Effects in 1804.

“ The result of this trial, made three years and a half after vaccination, confirmed its preventive power. The only effects produced were slight inflammation about the puncture in *some* cases, and in a *few* others, a small local pustule, which soon disappeared.”

We have been more particular in exposing the fallacy of Mr. Brown's statements on this subject, because he has with more boldness than prudence challenged contradiction. “ I have little hesitation in referring the decision of the whole question to this fact, which is almost within the power of every practitioner to obtain, when *I trust* it will be distinctly found, that in proportion to the extent of the period from vaccination, so will the approach be nearer to the appearance and effects of perfect vaccination.” Surely Mr. Brown forgot that he was professing to write to his professional brethren. Did he imagine that they were ignorant that this very question, on which he seems to pride himself so much, had been set to rest long before his most *original* publication appeared ?

The next class of cases is by far the most important, and deserves the most minute investigation. Of the forty-eight stated by Mr. Brown, eighteen were vaccinated by himself, and thirty by other gentlemen of the profession ; the village smith, the mothers of the patients, and in one case, as Mr. Brown has



stated it, by the patient herself, a child of five years of age, (p. 195.)

But for the sake of argument we shall allow Mr. Brown the full advantage of his thirty cases, and take the trouble of analyzing them. In sixteen of them, more than five years elapsed between the vaccination and the reputed small-pox; in eight, between five and three years, and in six, less than three years. In the first place we may remark, that these last six cases prove too much, and do not accord with Mr. Brown's hypothesis, which supposes the temporary security of vaccination to last about three years; and in the next place, we find that the whole series directly contradicts Mr. Brown's favourite idea, that, after five years, vaccination loses even the power of mitigating subsequent small-pox. Instead of the small-pox contagion producing regular small-pox in the sixteen, and modified small-pox in the eight, we find that in one of the former, (Case XVI.), there was no eruption whatever; in two (Cases XX and XXI,) the eruption was "neither so numerous nor so long standing," as in one where the pustules were about 100, "came to very little supuration, and decayed about the fifth or sixth day;" and in seven (Cases VII, XXVII, X, XIX, XXIII, XXXIII, XI, and XV), they decayed in five or six days; while in five cases only, (XXIX, XXXVIII, XXXI, XXXII, and XXXVII), did the pustules remain seven or eight days. On the contrary, of the eight cases, which should all have been modified small-pox, two (XXII, and XLIII) had regular pustules, and two (XXX and XLV.) had no eruption whatever: and, lastly, of the six cases which, according to his hypothesis, should have been unsusceptible of small-pox infection, or only of a very mitigated degree of it, two (V. and VI.) had it in the most perfect form.

We must at least give Mr. Brown credit for his candour in stating facts which so completely overturn a favourite hypothesis, although we may not admire his judgment in forming it.

Of the eighteen cases of small-pox after vaccination, stated to have occurred in his own practice, the exceptions are not so numerous, but more than sufficient to shew, that his hypothesis is totally unsupported by facts. Eight of these had been vaccinated more than five years before the appearance of the small-pox, and yet in three of them, (Cases XXVIII, XXXIV, and IX.) the pustules decayed in five or six days; whereas of the ten vaccinated less than five years, also three (Cases III, XVIII, and XLII.) had full crops of pustules, not decaying until the 7th or 8th day. So that the aggregate experience adduced by Mr. Brown in support of his hypothesis completely proves, that the antivariolous influence of cow-pox, in mitigating subsequent small-pox, if it have any such effect, does not gradually diminish, and does not at all depend upon the length of time that intervenes between vaccination and exposure to variolous infection.



Neither does the susceptibility of receiving small-pox infection gradually return after vaccination, so as to impart hardly any security after five or six years, and readily to allow the operation of variolous contagion after three years for Mr. Brown tells us that in the course of the last eight years and a half he has vaccinated about 1200, of whom, on the fair supposition that he vaccinated the same number every year, 450 or 500 should be absolutely devoid of security, and 300 others liable to mitigated small-pox from infection; and yet, although small-pox has raged epidemically in the district in which he practises, he has been able to muster only eight alledged cases of small-pox after vaccination among the former, or one in fifty or sixty, and ten among the latter, or one in thirty. Mr. Brown's own statement of his experience, then, would warrant us in concluding that the anti-variolous influence of cow-pox, as to susceptibility of infection, so far from diminishing, actually increases after five years.

So much for the consistency of Mr. Brown's inductions with the facts from which he pretends to have drawn them; we now proceed to inquire whether these militate in any way against the antivariolous power of cow-pox. In combating Mr. Brown's hypothesis, we admitted, for the sake of argument, that all his facts were correct, and that they were all cases of small-pox after cow-pox, but it will not be difficult to shew, that this was by no means the case.

Before we admit facts so contrary to general experience, we must be satisfied with their accuracy, especially if there be any reason to doubt that they have been misunderstood through ignorance, or misrepresented through prejudice, or what Mr. Browne calls, the rage for systematizing. The proof that small-pox supervened in these cases rests entirely upon our faith in Mr. Brown's accuracy of observation; and the proof that they were previously sufficiently vaccinated, rests partly upon his own observation, but, in a majority of cases, upon hearsay evidence collected by him. This last kind of evidence when it is inconsistent with our own observation, is totally unworthy of attention. It is liable to a double objection. It is equally inadmissible, if there be reasonable grounds for doubting the accuracy either of those who originally made the observations, or of those by whom these observations are reported at second hand. So jealous is our criminal jurisprudence upon this subject, that it rejects hearsay evidence, even when there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of the witness.

Mr. B. admits, that the failures chiefly occurred in the lower classes of society, nay, that hardly one instance has yet occurred where small-pox has succeeded to vaccination in the higher and more respectable classes of society, (p. 301,) and he has been at the trouble of attempting, though very unsatisfactorily, to account for this unaccountable circumstance. Now, without calling the veracity of these poor people in question, we are but too well acquainted with their instability and apathy; with the difficulty of getting them to bring their children for regular inspection after vaccination; and with the facility with which their ignorance, their prejudices, and



their fears, may be worked upon. Nay, we will even go one step farther; Mr. Brown himself seems conscious that their reports, as he has stated them, were not generally accurate. For what other reason could he have "carefully avoided any communication with the different practitioners by whom the children were vaccinated?" Had these gentlemen corroborated the evidence of the parents, Mr. Brown's opinion would have derived such an additional support, that we cannot suppose him to have acted so absurdly as to neglect it; but he well knew, that their evidence would have been adverse to his views, and the motive which he has not blushed to avow for neglecting or withholding it, is an aggravation of the indelicacy and impropriety of his conduct.

"It is perhaps proper to notice, that I carefully avoided having any communication with the different practitioners by whom the children were vaccinated, being aware of the strong hold that system has upon the human mind, more especially in this very important subject; thinking it best for the attainment of truth, to state with the greatest possible accuracy, the parents account of the circumstances that attended the vaccination of their children; notice the appearance of the arm; and give the names of the families, whereby an opportunity is afforded to any of the practitioners to satisfy themselves."

Such is the line of conduct best calculated, in Mr Brown's opinion, for the attainment of truth; and does this gentleman complain of the vaccinists stifling inquiry, and being averse to facts? does this gentleman expect his uncorroborated evidence to be believed; this gentleman, who acts so disingenuously towards his professional brethren; who goes about influencing the minds of their patients, taking advantage of their fears, and their weakness, and their ignorance; who, in a pretended investigation of truth, insults his readers by wilfully suppressing or neglecting to procure the best information in his power; this gentleman who, in the very act of supporting a darling hypothesis, does not scruple to insinuate that his professional brethren are not to be believed, because, forsooth, system has a strong hold on the human mind.

But not only does Mr. Brown's rage for multiplying cases of small-pox after cow-pox lead him to the disingenuous practice of stating many on the authority of ignorant parents, without consulting the practitioner concerned, but even some (Case VI.) in direct contradiction to the phenomena, and to the opinion of the practitioner expressed at the time.

How many of the individuals, the subjects of these pretended cases of small-pox after vaccination, were not duly vaccinated, we have no means of estimating; but that the number was considerable, we are convinced, both by the suspicious nature of the evidence with regard to thirty of them, and by the doubts suggested with regard to the whole of them, by Mr Brown's misapprehension or misrepresentation of the phenomena both of vaccination and of variolation. With his usual inconsistency, Mr Brown contends, that experience



in vaccination is of no use in enabling us to judge more accurately of the phenomena, (p. 234); and that every old woman is equally capable of ascertaining when vaccination is perfect as Dr Willan or Mr Bryce; but that, if any practitioner has not had experience it variolation, "he is incompetent either to conduct or judge of vaccination *singly or comparatively*," (p. 236). While we hope and trust, that, in the next generation, thousands will be capable of conducting and judging of vaccination *superlatively*, who have no experience in variolation, let us see what advantages Mr Brown has derived from his boasted experience. "In conformity, then, both with my own experience of the phenomena of inoculation and vaccination, I contend, that if you have a vesicle, attended with an areola, you may depend upon the production of whatever effects it (i. e. vaccination or variolation) is capable of," p. 236.; and a little before, "nobody ever dreamed of reinoculation where the pustule and areola were obtained," p. 236. If Mr Brown was satisfied with these proofs of constitutional affection from inoculation with small-pox matter, we must say, that he appears to have been very careless of the welfare of his patients. We could quote numberless cases of pustules with an areola from inoculation not protecting the constitution against future small-pox; for example, those of Mr Dawson, Mr Kite, &c.; but it is sufficient to refer the case of S. C. related in a note, page 303, of Mr Brown's own book.

Here we have in the subsequent constitutional small-pox an irrefragable proof, that the preceding vaccination and variolation produced only local affections; that, contrary to Mr Brown's assertion, local cow-pox and local small-pox, even with a considerable areola, exist; and that, as he was ignorant of the difference between local and constitutional cow-pox, it is not at all surprising that his practice in vaccination should have been so unsuccessful.

In like manner, he has admitted, as evidence of the occurrence of small-pox, what every person, in the least acquainted with its phenomena, will at once reject. To give some colour to his considering the production of a local pustule as a proof of the deficiency of antivariolous powers, he roundly asserts, that it cannot be produced once in a thousand instances after previous small-pox, whether natural or inoculated, whereas, the reverse is so notoriously known to be the fact, that country practitioners have occasionally kept up a series of local pustules on their wrists, to preserve a supply of recent variolous virus. Mr May has recorded a proof of the fact in his own person; and Dr. Willan, speaking of the 10th figure of his first plate, says, "The drawing was made from the inoculated arm of a young woman, who had the small-pox fourteen years before, in order to compare it with the appearances on the arm of my own son, when inoculated with variolous matter three years after vaccination. His pustules, however, so nearly resembled the above, that I thought a repetition of the drawing unnecessary."

If in none of Mr B's cases, except perhaps the eleventh, the proofs of the production of constitutional small-pox be sufficient, what are



we to think of his knowledge or candour, in bringing forward, as instances of small-pox produced by inoculation after vaccination, cases in which there was neither sickness, nor rash, nor eruption produced ! There is one, indeed, in which he was informed, that the child *sneezed* repeatedly, and, poor thing, it only drank tea to breakfast. The mother and the maid indeed attributed those alarming symptoms to cold ; but, what is the opinion of two ignorant women, in opposition to a doctor's, whose penetrating genius has discovered so many new varieties of small-pox, which no body before him ever dreamed of ?

Such are his proofs of the production of small-pox by inoculation. His proofs of the occurrence of natural small-pox are not more substantial. Of his forty-eight cases, the eruption in seventeen subsisted for seven or eight days, in seventeen others for five or six days, in six for less than five days, and in eight, there was no eruption whatever, but only sickness, with, perhaps, a slight rash. That many of the first seventeen, and perhaps some of the others, were really small-pox there is little doubt ; but that all of these cases were so, as Mr. Brown maintains, we positively deny. He contends, that they were not the bites or stings of insects ; that small-pox were epidemic in every direction, and even existed under the same roof, with the most characteristic phenomena ; none of the children of the family affected but those who had been vaccinated ; and neither chicken-pox, nor any other eruptive disease were known in the whole neighbourhood," p. 225. He also contends, that, with regard to confounding them with chicken-pox, no practitioner of moderate experience can possibly commit a mistake ; and to prove this, he subjoins a description of chicken-pox, which is very well contrived for the purpose he has in view. So far we could only criticize Mr Brown for giving a very partial and incorrect description ; but when we find him attempting to corroborate it, by the high authorities of Heberden and Willan, and subjoining, as quotations from these classical authors, what they never wrote, we are in duty bound to expose such conduct to the reception which it merits. As our charge is strong, and affects our confidence in all Mr Brown's statements of the opinions of others, and of his own observations, we are called upon to prove it in one case. In page 224, the following passage occurs in a note:—

" Dr Willan remarks : That variolous pustules are, on the first and second day, small, hard, globular, red and painful, and indented in the centre ; the varicella exhibits, on the first day of eruption, small red protuberances, not exactly circular. and having a flat shining surface, in the centre of which is a vesicle, of a greater or smaller size, which about the third day is either ruptured or shrivelled, and if attended with much inflammation, and remain entire, seem to contain a little purulent matter, and by the fourth, have obtained a small pointed dark scab. These appearances fully characterize varicella, and distinguish in from the firm and durable eruption of small-pox.



Now, on referring to Willan, it will be found, that this pretended continuous extract is not simply garbled and mutilated, but is absolutely fabricated. It consists of two lines from the 95th page of Willan, then a phrase of Mr Brown's then a mutilated passage from the 87th page, then a long ungrammatical addition to it of Mr B.'s composition, and, lastly, a short sentence from the 95th page again ! When such liberties are taken, when the inaccuracy is easily detected, and the perversion of the sense of a living author will unquestionably produce exposure, Mr B.'s uncorroborated testimony must be received with caution, whether he presents himself to us as an observer, or as the historian of the observations and opinions of others.

But to return from this digression, into which we were naturally led, by the strange manner in which Mr B. has quoted Dr Willan's description of chicken-pox, we may observe, that the diagnosis between that disease and small-pox is by no means so easy as Mr B. has chosen to represent it. Much praise has been given to the simplification of nosology in modern times ; but, on many occasions, we are afraid it is carried farther than observation warrants. Were we to admit no case to be small-pox, except those which accorded exactly with the definitions of it in systematic writers, we should reject not only, as we certainly do, Mr Brown's cases of pimples of two or three days standing, of rash, of sickness without any eruption, and of sneezing, but every case in which the eruptions did not subsist seven or eight days, and mature completely ; and, on the other hand some kinds of chicken-pox, so far from always resembling little blisters, and bursting in twenty-four hours, as represented by Mr Brown, even he must have known, from the very description of Dr Willan, which he has pretended to quote, subsist for several days, become purulent, and leave a pit behind them. We must quote the passage, to contrast it with Mr Brown's edition of it. "On the third day, the vesicles are shrivelled ; those which have been broken exhibit at the top slight gummy scabs, formed by concretion of the exuding lymph. Some of the shrivelled vesicles which remain entire, but have much inflammation round them contain, on this day, purulent fluid. Every vesicle of this kind leaves, after scabbing, a durable cicatrix or pit!" When to this we add, that, in most cases of chicken-pox, successive crops of eruption take place for several days, it is evident how little we can trust to Mr B.'s diagnosis, who will allow no eruption to be chicken-pox which subsists longer than twenty-four hours, and who have will every thing to be small-pox which is not this ephemeral chicken-pox. In his fourth case, for example," no eruption made its appearance, although there was a rash for about twenty-four hours." In the fourteenth, a rash made its appearance, followed with a few pustules, which kept out three or four days ; and, in the seventeenth, there was a rash, but no eruption, Such are, in Mr B.' opinion, decided cases of natural small-pox !

Mr Brown's cases, admitting some of them to be accurately stated, at the utmost only prove, that cases of small-pox have occurred after apparently perfect vaccination ; an admission publicly made by the



most zealous vaccinists, and repeatedly quoted by Mr B. from their reports, with his usual accuracy. His uniform omission of the qualification *apparently*, and his final substitution of *sufficient proof of the most perfect*, p. 276, need no comment.

The occasional occurrence of these cases must be regretted. They are owing partly to inattention on the part of the practitioner, and partly to the actual difficulty of distinguishing local from constitutional cow-pox. This difficulty, however, is not so great as to constitute a serious objection to the practice of vaccination. It may be completely obviated by the very simple and *unerring* test first proposed by Mr Bryce, but which Mr Brown misunderstands or completely misrepresents. As much nonsense has been written about it, we recommend our readers to peruse the account of it given by Mr Bryce himself, in the fifth section of his work and in the eleventh appendix. They will be gratified with the philosophical and successful application of pathological knowledge to practical utility.

The striking fact that these failures have chiefly occurred in the practice of certain individuals, such as Mr Brown, and that they are unknown or very rare in the practice of others, also proves, that they may, in a great measure, be obviated by proper attention, and that they only occur after *local* vaccination. Mr Brown has indeed given us a different explanation of this fact, and it is really too curious to be omitted. It amounts to this; gentlemen at the head of the profession do not meet with cases of small-pox after cow-pox, because these occur only among the poor! while those who have most practice among the poor, never hear of failures, because the poor never complain! Mr. Brown, indeed, despises the evidence of hospital practice. Now we are decidedly of opinion, that it is the most conclusive, when conducted as at the Public Dispensary of this City.

“ Two of the surgeons attend on duty regularly every Wednesday and Saturday at one o’Clock, for three months, and then relieved by the other two, who attend in the same manner for an equal period. The persons applying for inoculation are put into one apartment, and those who return for examination, after being inoculated, are put into another. The names of the children to be inoculated are then marked in the first column of a small octavo book kept for the purpose, each page of which is ruled with five lines, making four columns, from top to bottom, immediately after the names. This part of the business being finished, the surgeons next proceed to examine the arms of those children who have been inoculated. When the affection is advancing regularly, an A is marked in one of the columns of the book opposite the name of the person examined; if the affection be dubious, D is marked; and if it has failed, an F is marked, and the name again is inserted in the list of the day for inoculation, with a line drawn under it as a mark of re-inoculation. If these examinations have been made on the first day for attendance after inoculation, the letter above mentioned is marked in the first column, if on the second or third day, it is marked in the second or third column, accordingly; and if on the fourth day, *i. e.* on the fourteenth



day after inoculation ; and if it be observed that the person has been brought back regularly for examination, the words “ dismissed regularly,” are marked opposite the name in the fourth column.’

Here the facts are duly and regularly noted. Nothing is trusted to memory. There is no room for subsequent shaping and squaring of observations and opinions to suit favourite hypotheses ; no possibility of evasion. By the public record, vaccinists and antivaccinists must abide ; and in the institution 10,000 have been vaccinated, without one of those regularly dismissed having been attacked with small pox.

Contrast this with Mr. Brown’s practice, in which we must remark, and not without regret, evident proofs of carelessness and inattention. We should have expected, that, when engaging in a subject so new to him, so contrary to all analogy as vaccination, a prudent man, zealous for the discovery of truth, would have kept some record of the most remarkable appearances as they occurred ; and, in particular, that he would not have neglected to note, at least in his day-book or ledger, the final result of the operation ; and we should have expected this the more from a person who was led to doubt the efficacy of the practice from the very first case which occurred to him, and has continued to doubt it until his doubts have, at last, increased to certainty ; but no such thing. The whole evidence is “ according to my own recollection—from my memory—from my opinion expressed at the time—from the *large* mark in the arm—the mother’s *report* of the appearance of the arm—the mother remembers,” &c. &c. ; so that, in fact, the value of his own cases is reduced to mere hearsay evidence ; for that any man in such extensive practice as Mr. Brown, riding over a whole county, who has inoculated 1200 patients in eight years and a half, can, after five or six years, remember exactly what took place in each of them, surpasses all belief. We should also wish that Mr. Brown had noted particularly the number of visits ; *he* paid to each, as well as the period of these visits ; for we are not so ignorant of the nature of country practice, as not to know, that, from the great distance to which it extends on every side, it is impossible that the visits can be very frequent or regular, or that even the most charitable practitioners can at times avoid trusting the poor to the care of very inexperienced and careless apprentices.

His argument, derived from the absurdities he imputes to the vaccinists, and the contradictions and inconsistencies he has discovered in their writings, will not detain us long. Because the vaccinists are not unanimous on every point, and in all their opinions, therefore all of them are wrong, and all that has been written on the subject is absolutely nonsense ! As well might he contend, that there is no such country as China ; that Queen Mary never lived ; and that the battle of Talavera was never fought. Such an argument is truly ridiculous, coming from one who totally disregards consistency in his own writings, and it is something worse than ridiculous in so inaccurate a historian of the observations and opinions of others. We may also remark, that Mr. B. in making his quotations, very rarely, indeed, favours us with a reference to the page of the authors whom he quotes,



a practice which, though never commendable, may be politic ; and, accordingly, we have in vain examined the publications of Dr Jenner, or, the Doctor, as Mr Brown very politely designates him on most occasions, of Mr Byrce and others, for opinions and inconsistencies imputed to them by Mr Brown. By his method of tacking together shreds and patches from remote pages, any writer may be made to say any thing : Even whole sentences, when disjoined from the context may become unintelligible, or convey a different meaning ; but we cannot deny to Mr Brown the singular merit of composing entire paragraphs, which, when read by themselves, are downright nonsense.

“ 28. The college also concludes, that *they* are *equally* safe from the epidemic small-pox, *as well as* from the inoculated ; and observe, that towns and villages have resisted the natural small-pox. *They* scout the idea of *its* being only temporary security, not only upon the grounds already before them, of a practical nature, but also from analogy, *of* which they add, that there is nothing similar in nature.”

Before we take our leave of Mr Brown, and we can assure our readers, that we are as heartily tired of him as they can possibly be, we must say a word or two to his dedication, which is certainly *unique* in its way. It is a clumsy attempt to impose upon the public, by means which will not be easily justified ; to recommend his book to notice, by violating the confidence of professional intercourse, and complimenting an eminent and enlightened practitioner upon an opinion the very reverse of the deliberate result of his investigation.

It may perhaps be gratifying to Mr Brown to know, that we believe his book will create a lively sensation, and that it will do much harm, not by the extent of its circulation, as he will be convinced when he reckons with his printer, or by the contents of the book itself, for it neither will be read nor understood ; but by the industry with which it has been advertised, and by the fear and misery the poison of its title, unaccompanied by the antidote in the work itself, will excite in the minds of those, to whom it is enough that a book has been written against vaccination. This evil, however, we trust, will be but transitory, for at least we agree with Mr Brown in his motto, “ *Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*”



LETTER,  
IN REPLY TO  
THE REPORT OF THE SURGEONS  
OF THE  
VACCINE INSTITUTION,  
EDINBURGH.



### THE READER

*Is requested to peruse the Correspondence with Mr Bryce, Dr Duncan, and Dr Lee, contained in the Appendix, before reading the Letter to the Surgeons of the Vaccine Institution.*